

D#07 ALLEYS IN RC, R-1, AND R-4 ZONES

SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF REPORT

SUMMARY: This Supplemental Staff Report provides responses to issues that were raised at a Planning Commission meeting regarding amendments to the Renton Municipal Code Development Regulations (Title IV). It also includes additional information that staff has identified as being necessary to include in the analysis for amendments.

General Description

The City currently has requirements that state alleys are the preferred street pattern as part of new subdivisions. In 2007, Council supported an appeal to not require an alley system in a new subdivision within a residential low density zone. Council asked that subdivision code related to alleys be evaluated to differentiate where the alley network is appropriate, providing policy direction for this docket item.

Before approval of a new subdivision plat without alley access, an alley layout must have been evaluated and determined that alleys are not feasible. For new residential large lot subdivisions in lower density zoning districts, the inclusion of alleys as part of the street network are not appropriate compared with higher density zones with smaller lot sizes. The code should be clarified, to not require alleys in the Resource Conservation (RC) and Residential 1 dwelling unit per acre (R-1) zones. For the Residential 4 dwelling units per acre (R-4) zone, alleys should not be required, but be allowed or prescribed when the plat is allowed greater density, clustering of lots, skinnier lot widths, or other variables that provide a basis for using an alley system.

Planning Commission Issue: *Following the briefing on June 10, 2009, the Commission recommended adding criteria for when alley access would be required in the R-4 zone.*

Staff Response: With guidance and suggestion from the Commission, staff believes it makes sense to more clearly define criteria for when alley access should be required. More specific code language would provide greater predictability for developers as well as City staff in creating and reviewing projects in the R-4 zone. The following criteria should be added to subsection RMC 4-7-150.E.5 for evaluating whether to include alleys within a new R-4 development. Those criteria elements are to include:

- Reduced minimum lot widths,
- Allowance of greater density,
- Street networks in surrounding areas whether urban or suburban patterns,
- Significant trees and/or vegetation are preserved,
- Clustering of homes, or
- Site characteristics.

See Attachment A for proposed code changes.